Is There Another Ashe On The Horizon?

By William Coleman

Tennis still remains, despite some strong attempts such as the National Junior Tennis League, a more or less country club affair. Minority groups especially black, participation in professional tennis is small, as witnessed during this year's Evening Star Tourney in Washington, D.C. and other professional tournaments around the country.

Except for Arthur Ashe there was not a single black anywhere to be found, including the no-name qualifiers. Ashe at 33 is at the very pinnacle of his career. He was the first. He has been great. He broke the barrier. He has been for blacks another Jackie Robinson. Larry Doby followed Robinson and was the second black in major league baseball. Who will be the Larry Doby in pro

High cost of lessons makes pro instructions prohibitive to many black youngsters

The apparent absence of another young black to soon follow Ashe means that there may be a great hiatus in black professional participation as Ashe approaches the time of decreasing activity.

Professional tennis and tennis in general, save for the public courts (family-friend tennis) is almost the exclusive pressure of the wealthy. Lessons costing from \$6 to \$11 per hour are prohibitive to middle income and poor families.

This wealthy class dominance occurs in spite of the rather modest amount of investment required for good equipment. Yet, sandlot or pickup tennis matches are not common occurrences on neighborhood playgrounds.

Considering that Arthur Ashe has reportedly become a millionaire from his ability as an outstanding professional, one may wonder why there has not been either the Page 14

attraction, promotion, or development of talent of young black athletes as is done in team sports. Tennis players, managers and devotees are not now

accused of exclusion by design but it is a de facto status at present.

This past summer the big professional tourney held in Washing-



(Press Photo)

Arthur Ashe stands alone as a pioneer

ton, D.C. saw the defeat, as early as the second round, of all of the topseeded players except Jimmy Connors. This may portend what is to come more often in tennis.

The sudden emergence of a young new breed of player who just might not be from the "society class" and who themselves relate to the young unrich, is probable. This, however, will be much too long a happening to be of timely significance in the development of black tennis professionals. There is some reason to be optimistic.

Tennis audiences are about as cosmopolitan as any audience of spectator sports. And this is paradoxical because the tennis audiences are cosmopolitan not only in attitude but in the people them-

Unlike the more homogenous

Lack of money, proper training seen as barrier to young black tennis aspirants

makeup in attitude and personality as seen in ice hockey, box-lacrosse, and boxing crowds, the tennis fans are of the most wealthy and sophisticated box holders to the poorest of boys and girls bused in at someone's expense to participate in clinics held by the

These efforts may overcome the lack of promotion of tennis as a career goal for black athletes, the lack of money and club membership and other such obstacles.

In spite of some small reasons for an optimistic outlook there is the fact that for a week in the summer of the Bicentennial year of 1976 there was a professional tennis tourney held in Washington on courts set aside in the public parks which had flags flying reminiscent of a setting of King Arthur whose knights did their jousting for the royal audience.

And as in the days of old, here too was that one lone black knight defending against all comers and he lost. How long will it be this way?

Centennial At Meharry

By Kenyon C. Burke

While most people in the United States of America this year were focusing on the country's Bicentennial, another celebration of great significance to black people took place in Nashville, Tennessee. Meharry Medical College commemorated the 100th year of its founding and service to medical science.

Considering the barriers of racial discrimination and economic deprivation experienced by blacks in the last 100 years, it is not surprising that approximately 50 per cent of the black physicians and dentists practicing in the United States are Meharry graduates.

Most graduate professional schools until recently had absolutely no interest in training young black professionals for responsible and creative leadership positions in the professions, even on a token basis.

Fortunately, the need for the creation of a trained cadre of physicians and dentists for the recently emancipated blacks was recognized by such visionaries as Dr. George Hubbard, Dr. William J. Snead, and Samuel Meharry.

The birth of Meharry occurred in 1876 and began as the Medical Department of Central Tennessee College of Nashville, an institution established by the Freedman's Aid Society of the Methodist Episcopal Church in 1866.

Financial support from the General Education Board, the Rosenwald Fund, George Eastman, the Harkness Foundation, the City of Nashville, Meharry alumni, and the Carnegie and Kellogg Foundations have over the years sustained Meharry in weathering at times stressful but positive growth.

The college now includes the Schools of Medicine, Dentistry, Graduate Studies and Research, Allied Health Professions, the George W. Hubbard Hospital, three health centers, and the Howard D. West Basic Science Center.

Presently the institution is under rapid and significant expansion with new programs in family and community medicine; a children's and youth's program in pediatrics; master of medical sciences program; the Ph.D. programs in pharmacology, microbiology, and biochemistry and nutrition; continuing nursing education; health care administration and planning, and multiphasic

A review of its 100 years of existence finds a black institution that has emerged from early lean years marred by discrimination and economic deprivation to take its place among the leaders of those schools preparing health professionals to meet the challenge of providing good health care for all and especially the poor and disadvantaged.

Meharry's Centennial was bolstered by the National Medical Association and National Dental Association, both of whom convened their annual conventions this year in Nashville.

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